

Comparative Analysis of Communication Strategies for Accession to the EU – Lessons for Kosovo

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Abstract

On the grounds of the application for European Union membership, in its two sessions, the government of the Republic of Croatia adopted Communication Strategies for informing the Croatian public about the EU and preparations for membership. The implementation of the strategy remains among the priorities of the coalition government which was formed after the elections held on 25 November 2007. Taking into consideration great expectations of the Government and the public, the authors analyze the strategy of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and its specific entirety and compare it with the strategies of Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Latvia. By comparing specified strategies through objectives, target public, techniques and channels of communication, the authors indicate specific shortcomings and recommend possible steps to make the Strategy more applicable and more efficient, and thus accomplish the proclaimed objectives. Theoretical observations defined in that way are given as an empirical model for defining of the communication strategy for Kosovo.

Keywords: communication strategies, channels of communication, European Union, government information, implementation of the communication strategies, target groups.

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1. Introduction

The ending of the Cold War and the end of East-West division in Europe led to a strong wave of democratization in European states which, after World War II, developed socialist/communist social relations. Development of democracy and transition processes in those states developed in two fundamental interdependent directions - domestic and foreign policy directions.

In the process of transition, all these countries defined the membership in the European Union as a fundamental foreign policy goal. In order to have this goal achieved, these countries implemented a comprehensive domestic policy and social reforms in harmony with the criteria and standards of the European Union. These processes greatly changed the social and institutional relations, like political and economical ones. In such a situation of radical social changes and transformations for the success of the project, it is of special importance to ensure understanding of the population for the ongoing processes, and the final goal is wanted to be achieved. In order to ensure such an understanding, all the countries that gained the EU membership or are on the path towards membership, had a defined strategy which aimed at opening channels to familiarize the population with the objectives of the integration process in the EU and offer necessary reforms which must be implemented for the fulfilment of that objective. These strategies were implemented through informing the population and the public and through communication with the population and targeted public groups in order to explain possible impacts of reform processes and the role of individuals and wider social groups in the processes

After the Declaration of Independence on 17 February 2008 and the entry into force of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosova on 15 June 2008, the same objectives, more than earlier, were set to Kosova as well. In the announcement of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, it is stated that the Declaration of Kosova as an independent and sovereign state and the international recognition, has opened the way for Kosovo to gain membership in the international and regional organizations. Furthermore, it is emphasised that the

integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, and becoming a member of the European Union and NATO, is a strategic aspiration of the institutions of Kosova.

Therefore, like other countries in transition, Kosovo set the membership in the EU not only as its foreign policy but also a state and social strategic goal. By defining this decision Kosovo enters a process of transition, reforms and harmonization with EU criteria. This process will face Kosovo with many challenges both in the field of foreign policy and internal transition of institutions and society. Like other European states which entered earlier in EU transition and integration processes, Kosovo will also have to develop high-quality communication strategy with the entire spectrum of social structure, from individuals to the society as a whole.

The Analyses of communication strategies of Croatia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovenia and Slovakia, countries which are already members of the EU, or are on different levels of integration process to the EU, can provide significant experience material for Kosova in defining its own strategy.

Therefore, the goal of this analysis is defining specific elements of communication strategies - objectives, target public, communication channels and techniques, of observed states as a possible base of useful experience for Kosova in the process of implementation of standards and integration to the EU in association with the necessity for defining the communication strategy of Kosovo.

2. Planning and Administration of Programs

After the ending of war, the foreign political views of Croatia in transition were directed towards Euro-Atlantic integrations. Approaches to NATO and European Union were key foreign political priorities, which were seen in the efforts for signing the agreement of Stabilization and Association of the Republic of Croatia into European Union. This agreement was preceded by numerous mutual agreements in the region. At the time of European initiatives until 2000, the figure of Croatia in the world was not at the level of expectations by internal and

international public. That figure changed when the new coalition government came in 2000.

Based on the Government program from 2000 to 2004, the first *Communication Strategy for informing Croatian public about the accession of the Republic of Croatia to European integrations* was adopted by the Croatian government on 18 October 2001. After the change of the government in the elections held in 2003, the Croatian Assembly adopted the second *Communication Strategy for informing Croatian public about the EU and preparations for membership for the period from 2003 to 2007*.¹

In line with the application for the European Union membership, which the Republic of Croatia submitted in February 2003, in April 2004 the European commission issued a positive Opinion about the application of the Republic of Croatia for full EU membership (avis), and therefore in June of the same year Croatia acquired the status of a candidate for EU membership. In March 2005, the European Union Council adopted the *Negotiating Framework with the Republic of Croatia*.

As it can be seen, by the efforts of two Government assemblies, the legal framework and predispositions for the complex process of accession to the EU was created. On the one hand, that process is conducted in Brussels, respectively at the departments of Croatian authorities, and on the other hand, there is a «battle» for Croatian public perception of the process and the EU in general. The public communication process of forming the opinion of Croatian public is based on the implementation of the Communication strategy, which is mainly executed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations. The communication strategy and its basic elements are part of this analysis. The strategy is compared to other similar strategies of the countries which successfully ended the process of association, and Serbia which is at the beginning.

The communication programs, of Croatia in this case, and other analysed communication strategies were thoroughly

¹ http://www.mvpei.hr/ei/download/2006/08/31/Komunikacijska_strategija.pdf (8.3.2007.).

planned. Most of the theoreticians and practitioners think that it is necessary to observe the process of planning and administration of particular programs through the four phases process of problem solution:

1. Defining the problem,
2. Planning and creation of the program,
3. Undertaking of action and communication,
4. Evaluation of the program

The British author A. Gregory gives seven reasons why planning is so important. According to her, planning *directs the efforts* and eliminates what is unnecessary. It improves the result (by working on key issues it is easier to accomplish the given objectives). Organisation by planning *stimulates long-term vision*, as from the definition itself planning means looking ahead. Also, *planning helps in the display of rapports between values and money* (it refers to the agencies and departments), *minimizes accidents, conciliates misunderstandings and maintains proactivity*.²

Some theoreticians think that the process of planning is complex, but on the other hand, some others regard it as quite simple. Anyhow, it is necessary to divide the work into several parts, referring to 5 questions: *What do we want to achieve?* (What are my objectives?); *Who do we want to speak to?* (Who is the public?); *What do we want to say?* (What is the message I want to send?); *How will I say that?* (How will I send that message?), *How will I know that I did that well?* (How will I make the evaluation?).

Writing a plan for the program is nothing more than preparing a document which shows what to do and how to implement it. By preparation of that plan, either as a summary view or a detailed document, practitioners can be sure that all the elements are adequately considered and that everyone involved understands 'the great picture'.

² Gregory, A. (2000): *Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns*. London. IPR, p. 35-36.

2.1. The Strategy

For a number of programs it is often said that it is «all in tactics and without strategy». For this reason, most theoreticians believe that distinction of notions strategy and tactics is incorrectly used in practice. Since it is necessary to perceive the distinction, in short, *strategy* implies long-term planning, whereas *tactics* imply more the implementation of the strategy.

The term strategy is borrowed from military terminology regarding key decisions in a war or campaign. The strategy is, therefore, the overall game plan, and tactics consists of the decisions made during the battle.³

The term strategy explains how, in concept, the goal should be fulfilled, providing guidelines and topics for a comprehensive program. There can be one general strategy or a program can have several strategies, depending on goals and targeted public.⁴

3. Analysis of Communication Strategies of Croatia and the Countries in the Region

The analysis of communication strategies consists on four basic elements of each strategy. Those are: objectives, target public, communication channels and techniques, tools which are used in the implementation of the strategy.

3.1. The Objectives of Communication Strategies

Setting the objectives of a program is a step after defining a problem or particular situation. The objective is set in relation to the results of the program, considers D. Wilcox et al.

³ In a war the winning strategy maker seeks a battle after a victory, whereas the one who is predestined to the defeat first goes to the battle and then seeks victory. For a war, first draw a plan which will guarantee a victory, and then take the army into the battle. If you do not start with a strategy and you rely only on force, the victory won't be secured (Sun Tzu: The Art of War, 1981.).

⁴ Wilcox, D., Ault, P., Agee, W. i Cameron, G. (2001) *Essentials of Public Relations*. New York. Longman, p. 129.

Otherwise it could be said that the objective should not be 'means' but 'outcome'. A bad objective, for example, is 'creating publicity for a new product'. The publicity is not the 'outcome' by itself. The real objective is 'creating awareness of the consumer about the new product'.⁵

It is particularly important for communication objectives to complement and uphold the objectives of the organisation,⁶ and be real when being defined. In association to that, A. Gregory states that the objectives are set at one of three levels:

1. *Introduction* – encouraging the target public to thinking and promotion of certain levels of understanding. They are usually called *cognitive* (mind) objectives.

2. *Attitudes and opinions* – encouraging the public to the creation of attitudes and opinions about a topic. They are generally called *affective* objectives.

3. *Behaviour* – encouraging the target public to certain behaviour. They can also be found as *connative* objectives.⁷

Over-viewing the stated goals, it was understood that it is much easier to make someone think of something than taking an action. Because of that, most of the objectives of relations to the public are in cognitive (mind) and affective (building up of attitudes and opinions) levels, and not in the connative level.⁸

In harmony with the above mentioned theoretical thinking, let us see how the governments of Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic and Latvia defined their strategic goals:

Croatia

The fundamental communication objective of the Republic of Croatia expressed through the Communication Strategy is the

⁵Ibid. p. 127.

⁶ Professor David Dozier from San Diego State University in Public Relations Review stated the following opinion: 'Reasonable and strategic selection of goals and purposes of relations to the public linked with the organisational survival and growth serves to the justification of the program in relation to the public and sustainable activity of management'.

⁷ Gregory, A. (2000): *Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns*. London. IPR, p. 93.

⁸ Ibid. p. 94.

creation of the broadest and highest level of understanding possible of all the aspects of the EU accession to citizens. That in practice means accession to the greatest extent possible:

- The Croatian public must be informed with the benefits of EU membership, but also with necessary reforms which are required,
- The Croatian public should also be informed about possible consequences of non-membership,
- The Croatian public should be informed in the way which makes possible understanding of the rights and benefits which the Croatian citizens will individually enjoy and also the Republic of Croatia as a member state when they are an EU member – but also make the commitments which the membership brings,
- The Croatian public should be justly prepared for taking part in the debate over membership and have an active role in the process of accession.

In order to achieve these, the main goal of the Communication strategy is to additionally inform and motivate the citizens of the Republic of Croatia by:

- increasing the level and quality of debate in Croatia over its admission into the EU,
- creation of needs for information and satisfying the interest of public for information about the EU and the process of accession,
- eliminating the misunderstandings about the issues regarding the EU.

These intentions and goals determine the overall approach of communication to be based on sincerity, transparency, and providing timely, accurate and relevant information. Therefore, the goal of the Government communication about the EU is:

- Providing easy accessible and understandable information,
- Informing the public about the progress in negotiations and inform it timely about all the implications for them as individuals, social groups and Croatia as a whole,
- Elimination of ungrounded and wrong stereotypes about the issues related to the integration process and the EU, but also:

- Giving emphasis to the responsibilities and commitments which come with the benefits of the membership, and decreasing the unreal expectations.

Slovenia

Slovenia has become a member of the European Union. By analysing the Slovenian communication strategy from 1997,⁹ it can be seen that the main communication goal of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia was the possibility for creation of as wide and deep possible understanding of all the aspects of the European Union in Slovenian public. In practice it means:

- Formation of awareness about all the implications of Slovenian membership into the European Union – and the positive and negative aspects of membership and non-membership into the EU.
- Help in understanding all the rights and obligations which Slovenia, as a state and all its citizens as individuals, will have when Slovenia becomes a member of the European Union.
- Adequately prepare the citizens for their democratic right to vote in the referendum – which will encourage them for active involvement in the process of accession of Slovenia into the EU.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned, the main objective of the communication strategy was defined as 'informing the non-informed and stimulating the non-motivated' by:

- Raising the level and quality of discussion about Slovenian accession into the European Union.
- Creating and satisfying public demands for information about the European Union, the process of association and the importance of accession into the EU.

All these goals define the approach to the communication which should be «in due time, complete and truthful» and it

⁹ Program informiranja in komuniciranja na področju evropskih zadev (Program of Information and Communication in the Region of European Affairs, Urad Vlade RS za informiranje, Oktober 2004.

should avoid «advertising» and «selling». These provisions are in accordance with law obligations concerning information which is issued to the public by the Slovenian Government. Government information for the public regarding the EU should:

- Secure easily accessible and understandable information,
- Bring down non-desired pessimism regarding the membership,
- Bring down irrational worries and fears which Slovenians have in regard to consequences of accession of Slovenia into the EU, but at the same time,
- Subvert unrealistic expectations regarding the Slovenia accession into the EU.
- The tone of communication should be rational, not emotional.

Bulgaria

From 1st January 2007, Bulgaria is a member of the European Union. Looking at their Communication strategy¹⁰, the aim of the Bulgarian Government was based on the efforts to make every social subject aware of absolute domination of the positive aspects of the process of integration of Bulgaria into the European Union. Communication strategy is not a parallel process, but a dialog with the society and a way of guaranteeing a proactive standpoint. The strategy should mobilize and coordinate the existing institutions and resources for creation of a public dialog about European integrations – which means meeting the demands for information, applying unpopular measures linking them with long-term objectives of the state. All of this will result in real support to the governmental policy directed towards the membership of Bulgaria in the European Union. The implementation of the communication strategy is directed towards approaching of the Bulgarian citizens to everyday dimensions of EU membership

¹⁰ Communication strategy on the accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU, Sofia, 2002.

and at the same time increasing the knowledge of European Union citizens about Bulgaria.

Communication strategy is divided into two segments, depending on the goals and target public:

National plan – aims at familiarisation of the Bulgarian public with the goal of approaching the Bulgarian citizens to the European idea of Bulgaria.

International plan – aims to increase the support of Bulgarian citizens to access the European Union.

Slovakia

The Slovak Government also based its communication efforts for accession to the European Union on communication strategy¹¹. The main objectives of the Slovak communication strategy were:

a) Informing the public about the process of integration, needs and perspectives of Slovak integration to EU,

b) Informing the wider public about the benefits and shortcomings of the membership,

c) Creating a certain atmosphere which will secure the only possible outcome, the consent of the Slovak public at the point of referendum about the membership of the Slovak Republic into the EU,

d) Raising the level of knowledge among the wider population about the process of integration into the EU,

e) Increasing public awareness about the EU, its history, structure and process of decision making,

f) Approaching to the Slovak public the way of life in certain EU member states, the level of their economies and development of state members after their entry into the EU.

¹¹ Communication strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Preparation of Its Population for Membership of the Slovak Republic in the European Union, Bratislava, 1999.

Latvia

The government of Latvia also passed its Communication strategy.¹² The basic objectives of Latvian communication strategy are increasing the knowledge and level of understanding of local public about the issues related to the EU and all the consequences of access to the EU in order to reach a level which will make possible utilization of all benefits from the accession of Latvia into the European Union.

Table 6. The goals of communication strategies

Croatia	The fundamental goal of communication is creating the widest and the most fundamental understanding of all the aspects of EU accession among the citizens. The main goal of the communication strategy is to further inform and motivate the citizens of Croatia for EU accession
Slovenia	Since 1997, the main communication goal of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia was to create as wide and deep understanding as possible of all the aspects of the European Union in the Slovenian public
Bulgaria	The aim of the communication strategy of Bulgaria's Government is to make every social subject aware of the complete domination of positive aspects of the process of integration of Bulgaria into the European Union
Slovakia	Inform the public about the process of integration; inform wider public about the benefits and shortages of membership, raising the level of knowledge about the process of integration, raising the awareness of public, etc.
Latvia	Improve the knowledge and understanding of local public about the issues related to the EU and all the consequences of EU accession in order to achieve a level which will make possible utilization of all the benefits from accession of Latvia into the European Union.

Target Publics

In theory and practice of relations with public we find the term *target public*. Wolfgang Kinebrock considers that definition of the target groups was made in the mid-nineties of the previous

¹² Communication strategy on the Accession of the Republic of Latvia to the EU, Riga, 1999.

century. In his opinion, that task is not easy. Experts put an enormous effort to define the *target public* in order to «hit the target» afterwards by communication channels.¹³

According to P. Kotler «the target public will critically influence the decisions of the communicator – what to say, how to say, when to say, where to say, and who to say to».¹⁴ In the European edition of *Marketing* of Sally Dibb *et al.*, it is written that *the target public* is generally defined as a group of individuals interested for an organisation, product or social idea. The authors think that profit oriented organizations have potential consumers of their products as target groups. Non-profit organizations try to service different groups.¹⁵

Programs should be directed towards a specific public. The target public is reached by doing research, which can 'reveal' the key public. The target public can be reached with the help of demographic data like age, income, social class, education, existing possessions or consumption of certain products, place of residence, etc.

The definition of the target public is a kind of challenge to all the communication strategies. Member countries for the access to the European Union, whose strategies are being analysed, reacted to this challenge in the following way.

Croatia

The strategy is based on the fact that all the inhabitants of the Republic of Croatia will join the EU; due to that the entire population is a target group of the new strategy designed to raise public awareness and information about the integration process in the pre-accession period. The aim is therefore that information directly reaches the greatest possible number of citizens.

¹³ Kinebrock, W. (2000): *Multimedijski marketing (Multimedia Marketing)*. Beograd. Clio, p. 14.

¹⁴ Kotler, P. (1994): *Upravljanje marketingom (Marketing Management)*, Informator, Zagreb, p. 714.

¹⁵ Dibb, S., Simkin, L., Pride, W., Ferrell, O.C.: (1995): *Marketing*. Mate. Zagreb.

From the fact that the discussion will include as many inhabitants as possible, the goal of the Strategy is to be universal and to make information available to all those who request it. Since the membership in the European Union is a national project, the Government will pay special attention to inform those who oppose the integration process. The strategy, therefore, envisages activities that are approachable to the widest possible range of public, such as thematic TV shows.

However, the most effective means for establishing a qualitative contact with the wider population still remains the identification of the people who influence the creation of public opinion and the people who have an impact on social groups and communication with them and through them.

The strategy is specifically focused on certain participants who will, in one way or another, have an important role in Croatia's preparations for accession. They are classified into the following groups:

- Group A: Multipliers/promoters of public opinion
- Group B: The youth
- Group C: Groups sensitive to changes

Slovenia

The target publics largely determine the communication objectives and methods. All the inhabitants of Slovenia will enter the European Union so that the government target public is the entire population. The most effective way of achieving contacts with the whole population is the identification of the sectors of society that are important to each question and communicate through them. Therefore, the Slovenian strategy specifically focuses on specific sectors of society that are divided into 4 groups:

Group A – The creators of public opinion

- Politicians, government officials, media, public business, syndicates, NGOs.
- Local governments, academics and teachers, libraries, representatives of Member States.

Group B – Sensitive sectors of society

- The agricultural sector, the rural population, 'uninformed' and 'unmotivated': (restful people, housewives, unemployed, low-educated).

Group C - The youth

- Pupils, secondary school students, students.

Group D - Minorities

- Hungarians & Italians, deaf, blind.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian communication strategy for EU accession devoted attention to opinion makers as well, to the people with a great reputation in the society, who represent different groups that are important for the whole society. Their dealing with the EU topic will be of great importance for the success of the campaign in the group whose representatives they are.

At the national level they are: teachers and university professors, civil servants in the state administration, leaders of large organizations and parties, journalists, representatives of all religions, students and business people.

At the international level they are: the participants of the negotiating process, a high-ranking politicians, political consultants, representatives of counselling institutions, political parties, opinion makers in the member states, journalists, teachers and university professors, churches, diplomatic representatives of the member states and the missions of international organizations in Bulgaria, leaders of all organizations that operate openly, and broad classes of society in the EU member countries.

Slovakia

The Slovak Government identified the following among the preferred target groups:

a) the broad public: young people, people in the 'production' age, people in 'post-production' age.

b) Groups of creators of public opinion: the political elite, government representatives, clergy, journalists, representatives of local authorities, representatives of academia, scientists,

teachers, students, entrepreneurs (lawyers, private clinics, artists), top-managers, middle managers and small dealers.

c) Professional and interest organizations: syndicates, craft associations, professional associations, chamber of commerce and regional economic organizations and NGOs

Special attention was focused on the greatest opponents of integration and people who are still not sure whether to support the integration of Slovakia into the EU. In the first part of the information process, the campaign was primarily oriented to the creators of public opinion and not to the general public. The support of the creators of the public opinion was of fundamental importance for communication processes in Slovakia, especially at the beginning of the campaign. This target group comprises between 500 and 600 thousand people, i.e. 10 percent of the population of Slovakia, who is capable of direct intervention in the communication process themselves and their direction in support to the Slovak entry into the EU. The fact is that most of the people who belong to this target group supported Slovakia's entry into the EU and was very important for the communication process itself.

Latvia

The target groups, according to the communication strategy of Latvia, are: the rural public, especially Latgale region, young people and communities of the Russian-speaking areas. Other target groups: business people, mass media, academic elite, NGOs, local authorities.

Table 7. Target groups defined by communication strategies

Croatia	1. Multipliers/promoters of public opinion; 2. The youth; 3. Groups sensitive to changes.
Slovenia	Group A - The creators of public opinion; Group B - Sensitive sectors of society; Group C - The youth; Group D - Minorities.
Bulgaria	1. On national level; 2. On international level
Slovakia	1. Wide public; 2. Groups of creators of public opinion; 3. Professional and interested organizations.
Latvia	1. Rural public; 2. The youth; 3. Communities from Russian speaking areas; 4. Others.

3.3. Communication Channels and Techniques of Communication

Communication specialists nowadays have numerous communications channels and techniques. When it comes to traditional channels, then we first of all think of press, TV and radio. Nowadays, new channels of communication are available for programs and campaigns, such as: Internet, Web pages, multimedia presentations, fax machines, satellite connection, CD ROM. F. Jefkins shares them on the media above the line and below the line media. Practitioners have many tools which they use in the construction of certain types of relationships.¹⁶

In planning of communication with targeted public, practitioners assess the quality of each relationship and based on that determine which tasks should be done or what to say to enhance, build or improve that relationship. The planning of media starts when a practitioner decides to communicate with key public. As R. Heath and T. Coombs emphasise, the goal is to identify and investigate the best and the most efficient channels of communication used by the public. Practitioners of public relations create a media plan estimating what potential or exposure each medium can produce in the context of target groups.¹⁷

The choice of channels and tools varies in relation to the functions of the program. The goal of the program should be using tools that maximally increase the visibility of the message to the public. One of the central realities of today's programs is the need to think strategically before the beginning of communication. While seriously thinking about the media, a practitioner will be included in the assessment of the situation to determine which rhetorical problems should be solved. That solution may involve one or a number of other options of message development. The options of message development may require a strategic review of the contents of the messages

¹⁶ Jefkins, F. (2003) *Oglašavanje (Announcement)*. Beograd. Clio, p. 106.

¹⁷ Heath, R., Coombs, T. (2006) *Today's Public Relations-An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks. Sage pub., p. 306.

that will be used and the tools that will be utilized in that usage.¹⁸

The choice of communication channels is a strategic decision. Sometimes practitioners do not have a choice. If they receive the request of media, they respond to such a request, often by questions reporter makes confidentially or publicly (*reactive position*). On the other hand, practitioners create a plan that must be implemented (*proactive position*). After the goal is recognized, the skilful expert selects the most efficient communications. Channel selection may result in media mix strategy which will ensure optimum visibility and repetition of the message. The choice of communication channels and strategic media mixture must always be based on the achievement of organizational goals. Such a choice can be made in coordination with experts of marketing and advertising. This can result in integrated communications, since each of these disciplines creates a message to the public.¹⁹

By the development of public relations employees began to use many techniques (tools) of communication in due time. D. Wilcox et al. writes that techniques include numerous communication tools with the aim of reaching key messages to primary and secondary public. This means that programs of different public and objectives require different techniques. Each technique has its specific advantages and disadvantages. It is optimal to select the sequence that is complementary and which, taken as a whole, creates effective communication to the target group.²⁰ However, before we decide which techniques to apply, it is worth reminding, L. Potter as writes at "the discovery of nearly cosmic scale": the plans must be implemented by the people.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 307.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Wilcox, D., Ault, P., Agee, W. i Cameron, G. (2001) *Essentials of Public Relations*. New York. Longman, p. 130.

²¹ Potter, L. (2007): *Komunikacijski plan - srž strateških komunikacija (Communication Plan - Assence of Strategic Coomunication)*, HUOJ, Zagreb, p. 62.

Therefore, techniques are the practical part of the plan that describe activities that put the strategy into operation and help achieve the objectives. Techniques include the use of tools of communication in order to come to the primary and secondary public with key messages.

Communication and PR workers today have a number of techniques such as: updating the list of media, meetings, monitoring the media, announcements to the media, telephone conversations, press releases, review data, polls, video and audio statements to the public, informal meetings, writing comments and columns, writing and report preparation, writing and speech preparation, preparation of written materials, communications over the Internet and e-mail, interviews, press conferences, photos, exhibitions, fairs, letters, sponsorship, special events, etc.

An analysis of these channels and techniques reveals which were or still are the tools and media used by Croatia and the mentioned countries.

Croatia

Informing about negotiations of Croatia aims at making it possible to the public to follow the process on negotiations. Information means and procedures include:

- holding regular press conferences when it is important to recognize journalists who will actively monitor the process of negotiations of the EU accession, and report about it. Apart from regular press conferences, it is also necessary to have thematic conferences dedicated to individual chapters of negotiations, as well as some extraordinary conference depending on the dynamics of negotiations.
- organizing public debates, for example, through the National Forum for the Republic of Croatia's accession to the EU, through television, radio and other public discussions,
- special Internet websites designed to inform about the negotiations,
- the establishment of free info-phone/voice portal,

- issuing publications intended to general public as well as sector publications about certain areas, and chapters of negotiations held for special target groups,
- media activities (public discussions on TV, thematic TV and radio shows, cooperation with the printed media in the issuance of relevant thematic supplements); in this context, it is particularly important the involvement of the HTV as the public television in production of such programs,
- preparation of reports of the negotiating group on progress of negotiations that follow its dynamics, with special emphasis on sensitive issues, and inform the public about the results of the negotiations. This report will be available through Internet sites, and in cases where it is relevant in printed publications too.

Slovenia

The communication channels and techniques, according to the *Slovenian* communication strategy, are: Internet, direct communication, Intranet, business media, The regional offices of the Chamber of Commerce, trade unions communication channels, publications, communications channels of the Ministry of Education and Sports, specialized media, confidential organizations and individual communicators, local authorities, regional press and the media. Also, the channels of the Ministry of Education and Sports, syllabuses, children's releases and media, Internet, youth print and media.

Bulgaria

There is a large number of institutions and organizations that use many techniques for spreading information to the citizens of *Bulgaria* and the EU countries for raising their knowledge and interest in the topic of the European Union. The aim of the strategy is coordinating and institutionalizing connections among them to maximize the efficiency of each of the activities that are undertaken.

At the national level: the establishment of information centres regarding European issues (including those which are targeted to specific EU programs); publications on European issues (books, brochures, print, magazines and journals, bulletin boards and newsletters and the Internet); special radio and TV shows; meetings and discussions with the representatives of target groups.

At the international level: events at the level of official institutions and non-governmental organizations at national and regional levels, special events dedicated to Bulgaria, advertising materials about Bulgaria and the establishment Bulgarian information centres.

Slovakia

The communication Strategy of Slovakia specified the communication channels and tools that were used in the campaign for access to the European Union. The channels include: television, print, radio, Internet, Euro-car, books and various studies.

Tools of communication: events, organized happenings, Euro-posters; constant "refresh" of panels and information brochures, free tickets for EU events, books, special publications and articles, presentations of experts, audio-visual resources (e.g. videos, jingles).

Latvia

The basic communication tools of *Latvian* communication strategy are:

Public events: taking part in exhibitions, organization of the European day in 2004 and the day of expansion, delivering the EU flags to the Latvian local authorities, the days of the EU presidency, lectures, seminars, discussions, visiting Euro-house, Latvian cities and various competitions.

Publications: European Union programs, exploring the European Union (on Latvian and Russian languages), the EU information guide, the economic and social cohesive projects implemented in Latvia, translation and adaptation of European Commission publications and posters.

Media projects: a special TV program, a program on the national and local radio stations, monthly analysis of media, daily analysis of media, relations with the media (press releases, press conferences, interviews, etc.).

Table 8. Channels and techniques of communication

Croatia	Electronic media; printed media; interpersonal channels; Internet; etc.
Slovenia	Internet, direct communication, business media, regional offices of the Chamber of Commerce; communication channels of the unions, publications, communications channels of the Ministry of Education and Sports; specialized media, confidential organizations and individuals; local authorities, Regional press and media, etc.
Bulgaria	1. At the national level: Including those that are targeted to specific EU programs, publications on European issues, books, brochures, press, magazines and journals, bulletin boards and newsletters and the Internet; special radio and TV shows, meetings and discussions with pre-target groups). 2. At the international level: (events at the level of official institutions and non-governmental organizations at national and regional levels; special events dedicated to Bulgaria; promotional materials about Bulgaria, the establishment of Bulgarian information centres.
Slovakia	Television; press; radio; Internet; Euro-car; books and various studies.
Latvia	Public events, publications, media projects, promotional activities of the EU Information Agency, maintenance and updating of the Internet site.

The Strategy of Information about the EU - the Strategic Question of the Accession of Kosova

The idea of integration processes in Kosova, particularly directed towards the EU, was actualized after 1999, at the arrival of international administration and beginning of the complex process of transition. However, at the beginning the EU was more or less considered as a possibility for solving many difficulties and contradictions through EU assistance, not taking into account that the path towards European integration is of a long-term and complex character. Due to ignorance of the substance of the process, there were mainly noticed only the benefits of this process, not taking into account the cost of

adjustments during the integration process. There are often specified only the economic adjustment issues, not taking into account the political issues as a condition of dynamizing the process of approach. Therefore, the importance of democratization of the society, human and minority rights, the independence of the judiciary and the media was marginalised. All of these requirements are contained in the Copenhagen criteria in the form of political and economic criteria.

Until the Declaration of Independence, Kosova was in a specific situation in relation to the European integration. At the EU Summit in Thessaloniki, the Western Balkans was encouraged by the offer of the open European perspective. In that context it meant that the European perspective also referred to Kosova with the undefined political status. In fact, for Kosova, the EU built a special mechanism for monitoring progress in many economic, social, political and legal areas, instigating local institutions to necessary implementation of positive changes. After the Declaration of Independence, Kosova awaits even a safer European perspective with the possibility to improve the relations between Kosova and the EU.

After the Declaration of Independence, national interests became the strengthening of Kosova independence, the development of a democratic system, sustainable economic and social development for the process of accession to the EU. Spreading of information on European integration, especially in relation to Kosov - what the process brings to the people, what should be invested to dynamise the approach process - is becoming a strategic issue to Kosova. The population of Kosova should receive service with necessary information about the real meaning of the European dimension in the future development of Kosova and the Kosova society. In the case of small countries, such as Kosova, it is necessary, by distribution of information, to put emphasis on the possibilities of its participation in European and global economy as well as in the European political and cultural dimension. In the countries in which there is a positive mood for accession into the EU, it is particularly important to build the architecture of offering information, which strengthens the European mentality and builds a clear and transparent dialogue within the population

about European requirements, criteria, benefits and responsibilities. Consequently, in 2008, the European Commission adopted a document on communication with the Western Balkans with the aim of promoting direct contacts between the people and adaptation of the Western Balkans citizens to the EU. (European Commission Bulletin, 2008). By this kind of communication, it is aimed to gain the EU support for economic and political reforms, including strengthening the rule of law, good governance, judicial and administrative reforms and the development of civil society. Support will be gained by political instruments (the removal of visas, scholarships for students) and economic instruments (financial support). However, this format of communication of the European elite with the candidates, or the Western Balkans, is not sufficient for the accomplishment of mutual interests. It is necessary to develop the internal infrastructure for information about the EU, which would bring the citizens closer to the European perspective and resources on a practical plan. This is important when it deals with the countries which have undergone the past fires and especially the newly formed countries as it is the case of Kosova. Because of a lack of real information, the European perspective can actuate one-sided and unreal expectations especially in terms of rapid changes to the prosperity. Changes, particularly social ones, are closely connected with the dynamics of fulfilling the large number of criteria and the creation of sufficient administrative capacity to manage this complex process. The problem of accession should be set in terms of information as a process of adjustment and not as an act of decision-making.

A rational question is set - how to build communication channels in relation to European integrations when we talk about Kosova, which are the target groups, in order to reduce psychological, economic, cultural and social barriers. Assuredly, the experiences of the EU member countries should be studied and used, and particularly of the candidate countries for the EU membership. In Kosova, the focus of addressing the communication should be put on the whole population and, naturally, segment some groups which may be critical in terms of better understanding of the EU integrations. Certainly, it is

not sufficient for this process to be understood only by the government. When Kosov is in question, now the process of access to the EU starts to be institutionalized. With that aim in 2008, the Agency for European Integrations was formed within the government with the aim of coordination of government activities on harmonization with practices and legal norms within the framework of the Process of Stabilization and Association. As a part of the mission, there should be extracted the commitment for distribution of relevant information about the EU and the organization of information campaigns about the European aspects (Kosovo Agency for European Integration). It is really important to build stable channels of communication between the central and local institutions, particularly with the newly-formed municipalities in the frame of the Decentralization Program. In this sense, we should emphasise communication with minorities, especially with the Serbian community, stressing the importance of accession of Kosova towards the EU, and the possibility of participation in the process of approach, as well as strengthening European sense for fellowship and responsibility.

Before we emphasize some relevant elements of the strategy of communication with the EU, it should be pointed out that there are no indications in Kosovo of the existence of objections towards EU accession. On the contrary, there is a very positive attitude. Due to the lack of sufficient information, there are unrealistic expectations about the necessary path to achieve this important goal. Government involvement in spreading information about the basic issues of EU integration, particularly current and future positioning of Kosova in relation to this process is essential. Kosova, therefore needs communication with itself, in order to objectify the expectations.

In the period until now, clear channels of communication within the country with the aim of a better understanding the process of the EU integration have not developed. However, the civil society (Kosova Foundation for Open Society & Kosova Civil Society Foundation) has reacted with the formation of European Integrations School, which encourages the participation of all the ethnic communities. However, this

school is focused on high academic lectures about Europe. There remains space to cover information about other segments of society within Kosova by other programs. Taking into consideration the history and current strong positive feelings of Kosovars towards Europe, as possible channels for spreading of information, the following are suggested:

- Organizing summer school with clear target groups,
- Installing a radio station that will spread information about Europe and European integration and values,
- Encouragement of university institutions for including courses on European studies in their programs,
- Emphasizing via electronic and written media the main messages on a European idea and practice.
- Organizing studying stays at European institutions for employees of state institutions of Kosova.
- Creating space in newspapers and magazines to promote European standards and values.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Kosova needs a comprehensive communication strategy, which will ensure the necessary participation of all classes of society and enable continuous, timely and full communication of Kosova authorities with the target audience.

In this sense, the strategy should on no account be based on informing the public because was the dominant model in the development of the model of communication, Model of information (the information goes in one direction) at the beginning of the last century, and it was dominant up to 1920. In fact, it is still used to some degree, but its used value in relation to the *two-way symmetric model* is negligible. With regard to the remark we think that a more adequate approach is through a strategy of communication, which assumes a *two-way* communication (dialogue), as a form of more qualitative circulation of information.

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